(c) Does not arise.

**Loss suffered by the North Indian Cotton Growers**

693. SHRI SHIVAJIRAO GIRIDHAR PATIL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of Government has been drawn to the report that the cotton growers in Northern India have suffered a loss amounting to Rs. 1,000 crores as the prices of raw cotton prices declined sharply this year; and

(b) if so, whether Government plan to increase the support price of cotton at least to Rs. 1,200 as claimed by the Northern India Cotton Growers' representative ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) No, Sir. Owing to a bumper crop during the 1992-93 season, prices of raw cotton this year have declined as compared to last year. These prices have, however, remained much above the minimum support price level.

(b) The Government has already fixed the Minimum Support Price for the two basic varieties of cotton at Rs. 900/-per quintal for F-414/H-777 and Rs. 1050/-per quintal for H-4 varieties for the 1993-94 season thereby effecting a substantial increase of Rs. 100/-per quintal compared to last year's Minimum Support Price for both the varieties.

**Outdated coconut oil extraction process**

694. SHRI B. K. HARIPRASAD : will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether in the wake of deteriorating edible oil situation in the country, Government propose to embark upon a crash programme for development of post-harvest technology in regard to coconut processing;

(b) whether the coconut planters are still resorting to out dated technologies for preparation of dried/desicated coconut thereby prolonging the extraction of oil from the nuts; and

(c) whether Government propose to take steps to improve upon the sun-drying process currently followed, by more sophisticated/ mechanised process of coconut drying/desiccation perfected by Phillipines and Indonesia through import and installation of pilot plants?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) The Coconut Development Board under the Project 'Technology Development Centre', undertakes programmes for promotion and diversification of coconut processing. A process for production of coconut cream has been developed and process for spray dried coconut milk powder is being developed. Adoption of new technologies in desiccated coconut shell charcoal activated carbon etc. is being encouraged.

(b) and (c) For copra drying, the the sun drying method is used which is the cheapest and most suitable under Indian conditions and takes only about 6-8 days for drying. During rainy season kiln drying is adopted. Sometimes combination of both the methods are adopted. Since major of the Copra processors are small scale dealers and handle very small quantity of nuts, modern mechanical drying process is not very popular. There is no proposal to import coconut drying/ desication technology from Indonesia and Phillipines.